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Welcome Foreign Students

Washingtonians Create Little UN In Own Homes

By Dorothy McCordle

TONIGHT and every night candles lighted over home-cooked dinners in the Washington area make for a better understanding with the rest of the world.

The theme song of the soft lights and sweet music of such intimate international occasions is, naturally, "Getting to Know You." These are the words which have brought Washington hostesses together with foreign student guests from around the world.



Mrs. McCordle

In a Georgetown garden, students from sparring nations may jest together. At just such a party recently were entertained a Chinese, a Japanese, an Israeli, an Indonesian, a Nigerian, a Frenchman and a Chilean composer and his wife, all in one happy evening.

Students from Russia, Yugoslavia and Egypt may talk turkey about the cold war to their American host and hostess over after-dinner coffee in a District drawing room.

In an Arlington kitchen, students from Russia and Cuba, India and Iran may insist upon helping their hostess with the dishes.

In return, a grateful student may—and often does—turn his hostess out of the kitchen and prepare the succulent dishes of his native land. A nice little gesture of reciprocal hospitality.

These are thumbnail sketches of the new kind of miniature United Nations which has been created in Washington on the kitchen and family room level, as well as in the drawing room.

MORE and more Washington homes, the more modest as well as the opulent, are opening their doors to foreign faces of the young men

in United States colleges and universities to study our history, our science, our philosophy, our technology and our way of life.

Housewives participating in the program of foreign student hospitality are convinced they are forging a link in the chain of better international relations, even if that chain is only a charm bracelet.

The Foreign Students Service Council welcomes to Washington 4000 foreign students a year. This pioneer group of volunteer hostesses make their own homes the home-away-from-home for strange faces from distant places.

But the women do much more than this. They take the students into their homes for visits that last from one night to one week. They volunteer as chauffeurs to show the sights of Washington. They arrange appointments and educational tours keyed to the student's special interest.

From the moment the students climb off the bus—they rarely can afford planes or trains—they are greeted by these friendly Washington women eager to put America's best foot forward.

This is a two-way satisfaction, say all the women. The hostesses get as much as they give. They learn about strange lands and customs and how to understand them. They are usually showered with letters, family photographs and gifts from the student guests to whom they have shown the town.

Mrs. Daniel B. Moffett, whose husband is a physician in Wesley Heights, found that even her Russian student guests are grateful. They bring her little gifts. But they are her only guests who never write when they get back home. She understands why very well. Naturally, they do not want Soviet censorship to dis-

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over how much they like Americans.

Mrs. Moffett went to the wedding of one of her student guests — a Yugoslav, married to an American girl in New York.

She has shopped for all the ingredients of a native Burmese dinner and found every item in the shops of Washington.

Then Bimal, a student from Burma, turned the Moffett cook out of the kitchen. He permitted Mrs. Moffett to perch upon a stool while his skillful hands prepared a chicken, the Burmese way with rich herbs. For 15 minutes his nimble fingers kneaded up the dough of "puri," a Burmese bread. There were no vegetables. Dessert was made at the table from instant cereal, butter, sugar and raisins, all mixed together. This was Bimal's "meal of gratitude."

IN ARLINGTON, Lt. Cmdr. and Mrs. Thor Hanson were homesick for the friendliness of Japan. The Japanese had invited them into their homes during the three years Rhodes-scholar Thor Hanson had been stationed there with the United States Navy.

The Hansons longed to show the same kind of hospitality to foreigners in Washington. But they just didn't know how.

Then Capt. and Mrs. J. V.

Noel came to dinner. Mrs. Noel, one of the most active project directors in the Foreign Students Service Council, found an immediate recruit in Mrs. Hanson.

Last week Mrs. Hanson, mother of two little girls under three, prepared an old-fashioned meat loaf and baked a fresh apple pie for three law students here from Iceland.

"I want to do this every month," said Wellesley graduate Charlotte Hanson enthusiastically. "It is such an enriching experience."

IN THE Georgetown home of Mrs. Tracy Barnes, one night recently, an Iranian, a Cuban, a Nigerian, an Indian, and a Russian, were all jabbering away—in English.

"All of these students put us Americans to shame the way they speak our language," says Mrs. Barnes, who is something of a linguist herself.

Mrs. Barnes' favorite guest will always be that charming Nigerian mother who left her family behind in 130-degree heat and arrived in Washington in 30-above-zero cold. Her gauze-like draperies were no protection against the bitter cold.

The Nigerian mother was on her way to the University of Vermont to study French and mathematics.

She would go back to her home town to teach these badly needed subjects to her townfolk. The whole town, including her own mother and her mother-in-law, had insisted she come to America to "learn about democracy."

She had been prepared for much strangeness here, but not for the cold. The lady was resourceful. She chose bright red bobby socks and a turtle neck sweater worn over her Nigerian draperies to keep out the cold.

"This lovely lady is a real inspiration," says Mrs. Barnes. "She is so intelligent, so resourceful, and so happy in America."

MRS. Michael Luosey, of Westgate, Md., does all her own housework, has two youngsters, and a dog and a cat underfoot. She and Mrs. Henry E. Allen, whose husband is in the State Department's Office of International Conferences, are taking care of 23 students from Ecuador the five days they are in town.

Mrs. Oliver M. Marcy, of Georgetown, probably has the most challenging assignment of any Washington hostess. She has entertained Germans, Filipinos, Frenchmen and Latin Americans all during 1960. But in mid-October, she will greet 13 Russians and look after their

welfare for three full days. Naturally, she's hoping that matters at the United Nations in New York under the excoriating tones of Russia's Premier Nikita Khrushchev will not put a crimp in her little United Nations here in Washington.